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If you believe you are eligible to vote and encounter difficulty registering, please contact the Elections Division of the Pennsylvania Secretary of the Commonwealth:

Pennsylvania Department of State  
303 North Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
(717) 787-5280 (voice)  
(717) 705-0721 (fax)

If the Pennsylvania Elections Division is unable to help you, or to report a problem, contact:

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Voting Section, Rm. 7254 - NWB  
Washington, D.C. 20530  
(202) 307-2767 (voice)  
(800) 253-3931 (toll-free)  
(202) 307-3961 (fax)  
[www.usdoj.gov/crt](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt)

*This pamphlet is provided for informational purposes only, as an aid to further inquiry. The laws in many states are revised frequently, and may have changed since this pamphlet was issued. It is your responsibility to determine whether you are lawfully eligible to vote, and criminal penalties can result from voting when ineligible or making false statements on a registration form.*

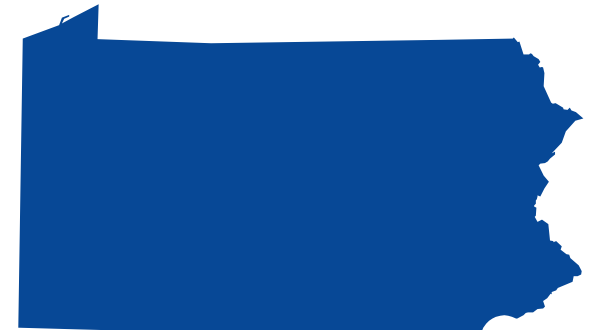
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U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division



# Restoring Your Right to Vote



## PENNSYLVANIA

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The right to vote is an important civil right in a democracy as well as a civic responsibility, and yet many persons who have been convicted of a crime do not know whether they are eligible to vote. For both federal and state elections, the right to vote is controlled by the law of the state in which you live. Some states restrict the right to vote for persons who have been convicted of a crime. This pamphlet is intended to help you determine whether you are eligible to vote in the state in which you live, and if so, what steps you must take to be permitted to vote.

### **What law governs whether my felony conviction limits my right to vote?**

The impact of a criminal conviction on the right to vote varies widely from state to state. Whether you can vote after being convicted of a crime is determined by the state in which you live, not the state in which you were convicted.

### **Can I vote while I'm incarcerated in Pennsylvania?**

If you are a resident of Pennsylvania, you may not vote while incarcerated as a result of a felony conviction.

If you are a resident of another state who is temporarily incarcerated in Pennsylvania, you may be able to vote by absentee ballot in your home state. You need to consult the law of your home state regarding both criminal convictions and absentee ballots to see if this is a possibility.

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### **I have been released from incarceration. How do I restore my right to vote?**

If you were registered to vote prior to your conviction, your right to vote is automatically restored upon release from incarceration. If you were not registered to vote at the time of your conviction, you may need to wait 5 years from the date of your release from incarceration in order to vote. For information about whether you are eligible to register, please contact the Elections Division of the Department of State at (717) 787-5280.

### **What if my conviction was for a federal crime or for a conviction in another state?**

Pennsylvania applies the same rules whether you were convicted of a federal or state crime.

### **What if I was convicted in another state?**

The same rules apply for Pennsylvania voters even if the conviction occurred in another state.

### **What are Pennsylvania's other voter registration requirements?**

To vote in Pennsylvania, you must be

- a citizen of the United States for at least one month before the next election
- a resident of Pennsylvania and your election district for the 30 days before the next election
- 18 years old on or before election day

### **When do I need to register to vote?**

Registration is available year-round in Pennsylvania. In order to vote you must be registered 30 days prior to the election.

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### **Where do I go to register?**

You may register to vote in Pennsylvania:

- in person at the Office of the County Voter Registration Commission or by mail, by completing a mail-in registration form and delivering it to your Registration Commission.

Or, you may register at one of the following state agencies:

- state offices that provide public assistance and services to persons with disabilities
- Department of Transportation photo license centers when applying for or renewing your driver license photo identification
- Armed Service Recruitment Centers
- County Clerk of Orphans' Court offices, including each Marriage License Bureau
- area Agencies on Aging
- Centers for Independent Living
- County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Offices
- student disability services offices of the State System of Higher Education
- Offices of Special Education
- ADA Complementary Para Transit Offices

If you register by mail or at one of these agencies and you do not receive any confirmation of your registration, you should contact your local County Voter Registration Commission before election day to verify your voting status.